

Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

St. Joseph/Benton Harbor/ Benton Charter Township, MI

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA selected the Cities of St. Joseph, Benton Harbor, and Benton Charter Township for a Brownfields Pilot. These communities are designated as Michigan Renaissance Zones—tax-free redevelopment areas created to spur economic development in distressed or environmentally sensitive areas. A significant number of Benton Harbor (58 percent) and Benton Charter (27 percent) residents live in poverty. Unemployment in Benton Harbor has exceeded 20 percent since the late 1970s, and 75 percent of residents live in subsidized housing.

Together these three municipalities have the highest concentration of brownfields sites in northern Berrien County. The Pilot targets four brownfields sites located in the three communities: the Edgewater redevelopment area in St. Joseph, the Graham Avenue and North of Main industrial areas in Benton Harbor, and the Fairplain South development area in Benton Charter Township. The sites were selected for their redevelopment potential, ability to sustain long-term growth, and potential to spur redevelopment in the areas surrounding them. The project will be administered and coordinated by the City of St. Joseph, supported by a local nonprofit economic

PILOT SNAPSHOT



*St. Joseph/Benton Harbor/
Benton Charter Township,
Michigan*

Date of Award: September 1998

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets four sites in the tri-city area of St. Joseph, Benton Harbor, and Benton Charter Township for assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment.

Contacts:

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U.S. EPA – Region 5
(312) 353-3161

Visit the EPA Region 5 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

development corporation, the Cornerstone Alliance, and implemented by the individual local governments.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the cities' program is to combine urban revitalization efforts and brownfields redevelopment projects. The cities plan to incorporate environmental assessments, infrastructure improvements, and outreach activities with physical redevelopment projects to expand the local economy and create sustainable economic opportunities for local residents. Pilot activities in the four target areas include conducting assessments, reviewing and analyzing ways to retain and bolster existing businesses, and facilitating job creation.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot is:

- Conducting community outreach activities related to the target areas;
- Conducting environmental assessments on the four targeted sites; and
- Planning for environmental cleanup and redevelopment at the sites.